

Belt and Road Initiative Sparking ‘Profound Changes’ in the World

May 15—Today Helga Zepp-LaRouche, chairwoman and founder of the Schiller Institutes, was one of the two guests on the China Global Television Network’s prime-time, live interview show, “Dialogue with Yang Rui,” following her participation in the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation, May 14-15 in Beijing. Yang’s other guest was Dr. Su Ge, President of the China Institute of International Studies, the think tank of the Foreign Ministry of China.

This is EIR’s transcription of the program, in which Dr. Su and Mrs. Zepp-LaRouche strongly agreed that, in his words, “profound changes ... tremendous changes” are already taking place in the world and that it is possible for people to give up their “dark glasses of the Cold War” and think differently. A video of the program is available [here](#) and [here](#).

Yang Rui: Twenty-nine foreign leaders and more than 1,500 delegates from over 130 nations attended the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation in

Beijing, from May 14 to 15. China’s President, Xi Jinping, called the Belt and Road Initiative “the project of the century” in his keynote presentation at the opening ceremony. He also promised that China will create a new model of cooperation and mutual benefit in advancing the initiative. However, some critics are skeptical about China’s goals for the initiative. To discuss the issues related to China’s Belt and Road, I am pleased to be joined in the studio by Dr. Su Ge of the China Institute of International Studies and Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the Schiller Institute. That’s our topic. This is “Dialogue.” I am Yang Rui.

‘Project of the Century’

Yang Rui: What do you make of China’s global initiative?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: I think it’s a very important strategic initiative because it’s the only way in which you can solve all problems—regional, cooperation, underdevelopment, poverty. It’s really a historic



CGTN/screen shot

Dr. Su Ge (left) and Helga Zepp-LaRouche (center) being interviewed by Yang Rui on his CGTN Dialogue show.

mission. I cannot see anything else, not from the United States—for sure, not from Europe—so I’m really optimistic. I think yesterday was a fantastic, historic moment.

Yang Rui: Yes. We see extensive media coverage about the Belt and Road Summit in Beijing. Dr. Su, among the following phrases to characterize the Belt and Road Initiative, which one do *you* prefer to choose: Global Ambition, World Leadership, or World Order, regarding the Belt and Road Initiative?

Su Ge: Well, probably some people say it is none of the above; some people would say it is all of the above. However, if you ask my opinion, I would say that the Belt and Road Initiative put forward by President Xi Jinping is a set of ideas and programs for peace, for prosperity, and for the future goodness of all countries and mankind, because now we are thinking of the whole human race, mankind, to have one destiny. We call it “shared destiny.” And President Xi Jinping, in his speech, he said something,— well he is the head of a state. But sometimes he speaks like a historian, and also speaks like a philosopher.

Yang Rui: If not like the head of a big company. [Laughter.]

Su Ge: But he said, we have to find the general key to all existing problems in our world, in other words, development.

Yang Rui: [Cross-talk] . . . he wants to provide our own solution to some of the problems. But do you think China is ready?

Zepp-LaRouche: Oh, I think so. First of all, the Chinese economic miracle of the last 30 years has surprised the world. And now through the Belt and Road Initiative, China is offering to export that model of development to other countries. And if you look at the success of the Belt and Road Initiative in the last four years, it is absolutely breathtaking! And I am shocked—every day the Chinese government comes up with a new initiative which offers a solution to a problem. And it’s just a very attractive idea. This is why so many countries want to be part of it.

It’s much more attractive to have win-win cooperation in the context of the New Silk Road, than to be part of a military alliance that just gets countries into trouble. So this is why the whole center of power has completely shifted to Asia.

I am convinced that yesterday we experienced the

formation of a new world economic order. It was a truly historic moment, and I think most of the participants in the Belt and Road Forum had that profound sense of being in the middle of making history for a new era for civilization. I am very excited because this is a phase-change of humankind. I think we are on the verge of . . .

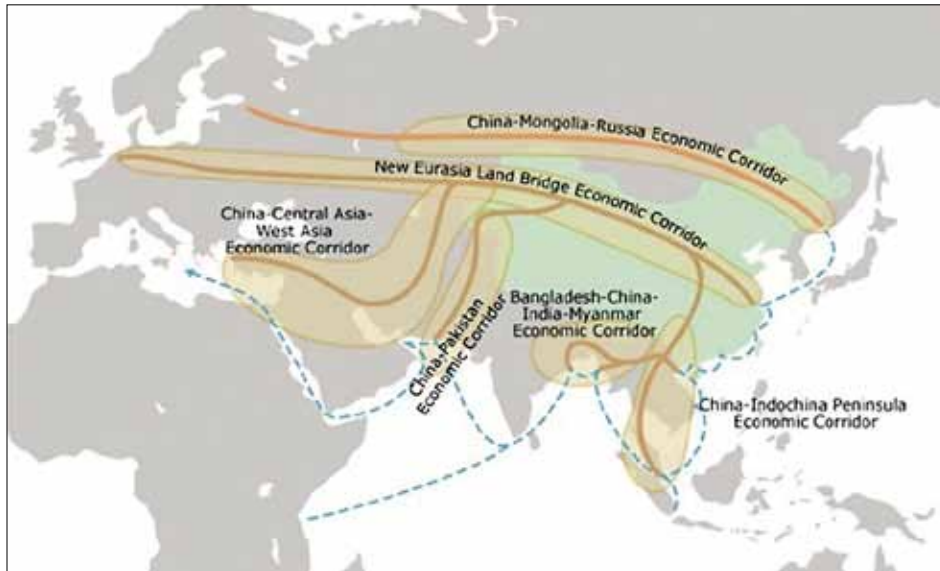
Is the Belt and Road a Threat?

Yang Rui: No wonder President Xi Jinping calls the Belt and Road Initiative the “project of the century.” Dr. Su, do you foresee peaceful coexistence between the Bretton Woods [system] and the Belt and Road Initiative? I notice that President Xi Jinping emphasized in his keynote presentation that the Belt and Road Initiative does not aim to replace some of the existing mechanisms and initiatives such as that of the Russian Federation; the Turkish government also comes up with its own ambitious plan. All politicians throughout the world have their own vision of what the future might hold for the global economy. Now what do you make of President Xi’s pledge that the Belt and Road Initiative does not threaten to replace other, existing mechanisms?

Su Ge: Well that’s a very good, an excellent question. You mentioned the Bretton Woods, and some people, indeed, compare the Belt and Road to the so-called Marshall Plan [launched] in 1947, after the Second World War. But actually, the Belt and Road Initiative is not like any of these, because as President Xi Jinping said, from a historical viewpoint, when you look at the pioneers who took part in the ancient Silk Road, people used camel caravans. They did not carry with them spears, cannons, or guns. It was not one civilization conquering the other, but one civilization brought with it good will, and goods of silk, tea, and other commodities. And [it was] for connectivity, for inter-connectivity, between and among peoples, among cultures and civilizations, in addition to business and trade.

Yang Rui: I am afraid the Indian government disagrees. They say, Hey, the Sino-Pakistani economic corridor will somehow go through the contentious, territorial area of India, the Kashmir, and therefore they refuse to get involved in the Belt and Road Initiative. The spokesperson of the Indian foreign ministry even protested against the idea of the economic corridor between China and its [India’s] geopolitical rival, Pakistan. What do you think of the rivalry, the geopolitical rivalry that China wants to really keep a distance from?

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, first of all, India has always



Hong Kong Trade Development Council

The Belt and Road Initiative: six economic corridors spanning Asia, Europe and Africa.

been the subcontinent, and therefore it has a long tradition of geopolitical thinking. But, I think this has been reinforced by British colonialism, and the British, and formerly the U.S. Administration before Trump, played on that. They played Pakistan as a source of state terrorism, trying to hype up sentiments in India to further this conflict.

But I think the opposite is true. Because of the British division of India into Pakistan, Bangladesh, and India, the only way this conflict can be overcome is by increasing the connectivity among all the countries: Nepal, Bangladesh, all these countries want to be integrated. And they call it “connectivity”; they don’t call it the “Silk Road” and they don’t call it “Belt and Road Initiative,” because that’s associated with China. But in substance, all of these countries urgently want more development like that of the Belt and Road Initiative.

The Eurasian Dumbbell

Yang Rui: Perhaps the Indian [word indistinct] is exactly based on a very sophisticated calculation about the BRICS Summit, which is to take place in China as well, this year, and therefore, they reject one, but agree to participate in the other. What do you make of the importance of the emerging markets, the shaping,— the vibrant markets of the developing countries? Some of the scholars from industrial nations say, Hey, why don’t you invite the industrial nations to develop the countries, to get involved in this ambitious blueprint?

Su Ge: That’s also a very nice question. When you look at the geography, the map of the Belt and Road ini-

tiatives, it is like something in sports, the dumbbell, with Europe as one end of the dumbbell and the Asia-Pacific region as the other. And the great landmass in between just serves as the handle. It just so happens that most of the countries of the area are developing countries. It is not that China chooses a group of countries to come as China’s allies. China now has a foreign policy that China does not seek allies; we seek partners. It just so happened that all the countries in the handle between Europe and Asia, this Eurasia map, are developing countries. Of

course, the developing countries need the development, they need prosperity, and the Belt and Road Initiative serves best their national interests. And we find a convergence of national interests. That’s why these countries would like, *would love*, to jump on the boat.

Trump and the United States

And also, the Belt and Road initiatives are inclusive in nature. As President Xi Jinping said, it is open to all countries, to all. That’s why you can see that the United States—well, maybe it is not along the traditional Silk Route—however, it decided to send a representative to the forum. So, as I . . .

Yang Rui: What’s interesting is that both sides announced their joint projects—the list of projects agreed upon—simultaneously. Do you think something must have been discussed at the Mar-a-Lago summit in Florida, between Trump and President Xi Jinping? And that actually the announcement of this list of mega-projects between the two sides is an indispensable part of what has been agreed upon by the two heads of state?

Zepp-LaRouche: I think so, because President Trump has announced that he wants to have investment in \$1 trillion worth of infrastructure in the next ten years. The American Society of Civil Engineers estimates that \$4.5 trillion actually is required, and Chinese experts have said that the United States needs \$8 trillion worth of infrastructure. Now China in the past years has shown a tremendous expertise in building fast trains and other infrastructure projects. China also has \$1.4



range. But if you go to the side of it, it looks like all peaks. Perspectives matter!

Yang Rui: [Recites the saying in Chinese.]

Su Ge: For instance, if you just think like an ordinary businessman, in the Belt and Road Initiative, how much you put in and how much you want to gain back: well that's another thing. But then, if you regard this as a public product, a public good, then it will be a benefit, it will be shared by all of the countries, and then you will reap the gains, not only in terms of dollars and cents, but in connectivity, but people's understanding, marriage of civilizations, and then better lives for the future generations. And this will be a tremendous way to look at the Belt and Road.

President Trump meeting China President Xi Jinping at Mar-a-Lago, Florida, April 6, 2017.

trillion in U.S. Treasuries, which we have proposed be invested in an infrastructure bank or national bank in the United States, to make investments in the building of infrastructure.

Now that would be a total game-changer. And if China, in return, would invest in the Chinese market, which is growing because of its growing buying power, you could replace the competition between the United States and China through cooperation. And then they could join hands and have joint investments in third countries, like rebuilding the Middle East and developing Africa.

I think it's important that you're not just talking about infrastructure and economics. We are really talking about the new era of civilization, where you replace geopolitics with a completely new set of relations among countries. And if the United States and China could solve this,— you know, I have said many times that if President Trump would go for this, he could become one of the greatest Presidents in the history of the United States. Many of his critics don't think that is possible, but I am absolutely convinced that we are very close to it.

Yang Rui: Challenges lie ahead. One of them, I am afraid, is the alleged poor efficiency of the capital allocation. Many are very sceptical about the return on investment in developing countries in particular. What do you think are the risks?

Su Ge: It depends on how you look at it. In Chinese, we have a saying that when you look at a mountain when you are in front of it, it looks like a mountain

China, Japan and Russia

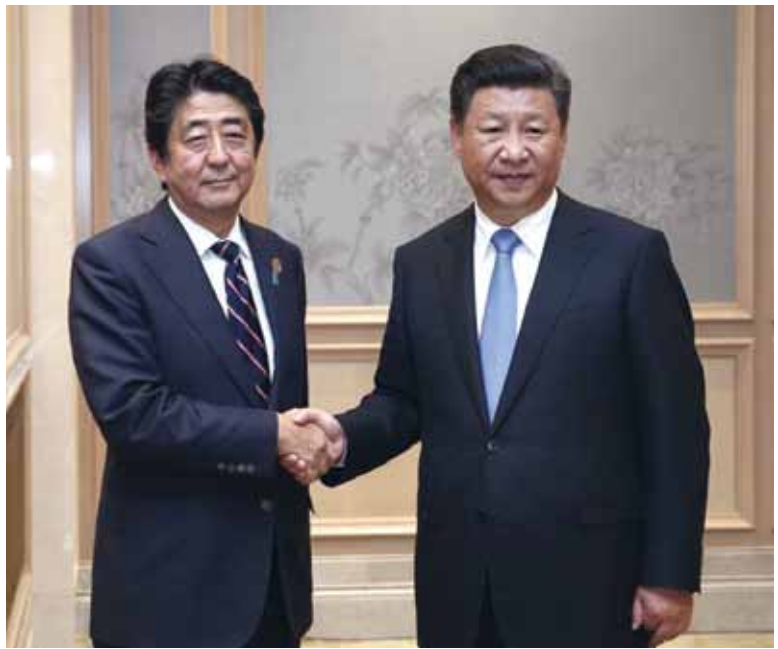
Yang Rui: And in fact, overseas observers pointed out that President Xi Jinping was talking to two audiences at the opening ceremony. For the international audience, he promised to export our technology, our ideas about the Belt and Road Initiative; to re-establish the world order; and to reconsider the idea of globalization internally. He also promised to rejuvenate the nation, to tell a China story through the Belt and Road Initiative.

To the surprise of many who are very sceptical about the economic relationship between Japan and China—two arch-competitors, economically and geopolitically as well—the Japanese government decided to send a senior delegation, which was headed by the head of the ruling party, the LDP, Liberal Democratic Party. And this head of the delegation also handed over a letter from Prime Minister Shinzo Abe to the host of the Belt and Road Initiative summit. What do you think of the possibility that Japan will seize this opportunity to drastically improve not only the [words indistinct] ties, but also to enjoy the dividends of the Belt and Road Initiative, so that it will not be excluded from rebuilding the world economic order?

Zepp-LaRouche: I think it is very clear that Prime Minister Abe has the intention to do that. He sent the *de facto* number two of the LDP to the summit. I think it has to do with the change in perception, that the world is indeed changing.

Look at the rapprochement between Russia and Japan over the last period: Abe has the intention to have a peace treaty during his time in office. There were many visits by Abe to Russia, and vice versa, Putin visited Tokyo. Meanwhile, China has a very close relationship with Russia, and Trump has said he doesn't want to continue the offensive policies of the United States of interventions in foreign wars.

Then, the situation in the South China Sea has completely shifted; it's no longer such an important hot spot. I think we are on the verge of fixing the world according to completely new rules. It's really a time for people to re-think, and not to stick to old geopolitical schemes that were dominant in the Cold War, because we are on the verge of a completely new era of civilization, and I think what Abe did, reflects that.



Xinhua/Pang Xinglei

Japan Prime Minister Shinzo Abe (left), being greeted by China President Xi Jinping at the G-20 summit in Hangzhou, China on Sept. 5, 2016.

Scrap the Cold War Dark Glasses

Yang Rui: Ironically, the young leader of the D.P.R.K. test-fired a missile to coincide with the policy speech by President Xi Jinping at the opening ceremony. Yet the elected leader of the R.O.K., Mr. Moon, promised to reconsider the deployment of the THAAD, a missile shield program that may have paved the way for an apparent improvement in the bilateral relationship [between South and North Korea], which has been frayed seriously by the THAAD program. What do you think of, say, the R.O.K. delegation,— and in fact, a rumor went viral on the Internet that President Trump called for a boycott of the Belt and Road summit saying, “Hey, why did you invite the D.P.R.K. to attend the summit while the international society, through the UN Security Council, imposed yet another economic sanction?” I believe the new sanction is well underway. What do you think of the concerns, allegedly, a major concern, according to the international media?

Su Ge: There are two ways to look at the situation. One is to put your eyes as close as possible to the canvas. The other is to step back and look at the whole picture. I would say that the international situation is undergoing one of the most important, profound changes since the end of the Cold War. I agree with Zepp-LaRouche that there are tremendous changes already taking place. Maybe we are stepping into a new era, because the Cold War is over. If you still use the Cold War mentality, if

you still look at world affairs in terms of zero-sum games, then things will appear different. I would say that you cast aside, people cast aside the dark glasses left over from the Cold War years.

Yang Rui: But I am afraid that those who are very skeptical about China's intent, may point out, citing President Bush, Jr., that bad behavior should not be rewarded. So this invitation for the D.P.R.K. delegation has been very controversial. I'd like to have your take on it.

Zepp-LaRouche: Well, I think there are some people who are thinking in terms of the old paradigm of geopolitics, and they can just not imagine that a country, especially a large country like China, would be motivated by Confucian ideas. And I have studied China for the better part of my life, and I have come to the conclusion that the present government, in particular, is not based on anything other than the Confucian idea of harmony among nations. And some people realize that. For example the Italian Prime Minister Gentiloni, at the Belt and Road Forum, gave a fantastic speech, in which he said . . .

Yang Rui: Excuse me, but harmony would become a [words indistinct], if we do not respect some of the principles which have a lot to do with our national security. The nuclear program of the D.P.R.K. has indeed endangered the northern three provinces, Heilongjiang, Jilin,

and Liaoning, if any nuclear fallout were to occur! That would be a major threat [crosstalk] to national security.

Zepp-LaRouche: But the new President of South Korea has basically said that he wants to go back to the Sunshine Policy of economic cooperation with the North. North Korea only has nuclear missiles because they were afraid they would have the same fate as Saddam Hussein or Qaddafi. And once that threat is taken away and we return to the Six Party Talks and the Sunshine Policy, and especially if this is in the context of the Belt and Road Initiative, I am absolutely confident that this problem will go away very shortly.

Let's Help North Korea Develop

Yang Rui: What do you think of China's efforts to leverage our limited influence on the D.P.R.K., by maintaining the links? Without the links, you will not be able to leverage the resources. By including the D.P.R.K., it showcases the readiness of the Chinese authorities to adopt an inclusive scheme. That is the essence of the Belt and Road Initiative, which aims to ensure an era of co-prosperity. And therefore, the D.P.R.K. should not be an island! What do you think of the intent of the Chinese government, which has drawn a lot of fire?

Su Ge: Allow me to quote from President Xi Jinping. He says that development is the key to all of these problems. What he is saying [relates to why] things are so complicated in Afghanistan. And some people wanted to solve the problems with a big stick, with military means. However, I doubt whether military means can eradicate the roots of radicalism. But eventually the key is development, and bringing up the people's consciousness through education and a better life.

For the D.P.R.K., the international community is carrying out sanctions by order of the UN Security Council. You have sanctions, you have tough measures, and you have to let them know that when you shut all of the doors, you have to leave one window open. That is the only way out. Through your reforms, through opening to the outside world, by construction, by letting the people go through the general road of market reforms. Then you can build up the economy. Then your people know that that is the only correct way out. The United States may say that,— some people are saying, "Let's get tougher!" Yes, people are carrying out the sanctions, Resolution 2270 and other measures, by the order through the UN Security Council. However, economic construction,— if finally, they embrace ideas of market reforms, I think that would be the correct way out.

Europe Will Join in the Belt and Road

Yang Rui: The last question is whether there's going to be a collision or a clash between Russia's brainchild of the Eurasian Economic Union, and the Belt and Road Initiative. Because there have been speculations by the media, saying, "Hey, Russia may show its great concern about China's interference with the internal affairs of its traditional backyard, Central Asia, through perhaps the role of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization." And therefore, they focus on whether there's going to be inconsistency and discrepancy between Russia's Economic Union and the Belt and Road Initiative. What's your take?

Zepp-LaRouche: You will be happy to hear that President Putin, who was the guest of honor at the Belt and Road Forum, already gave a press conference where he said that not only does Russia support the Belt and Road Initiative, but it will take an active role in promoting it.

And if you look at the number of leaders and countries that are now joining, you have a total change in the dynamic—Tsipras from Greece, the Serbian government, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Belarus, Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Switzerland—all of these countries have said they want to become hubs of the Belt and Road Initiative. So even if the German Economics Minister at the forum was not so friendly, let's say, I think Germany will be soon surrounded by countries that want to be part of it, and I think this will tilt the situation.

The former Prime Minister of France, Jean-Pierre Raffarin, gave a passionate speech about why France should be in it, and he was sent to the forum by the new President, Macron.

So I'm absolutely convinced that in half a year, the majority of the nations that are still reluctant, will recognize that it is in their best interest. Because, for example, Germany should have a fundamental interest in cooperating. German industry, the *Mittelstand*—medium-sized industry—is exactly the complementary kind of economic force that would perfectly work with China. And I think it will come around. I promise!

Yang Rui: Despite the success of Emmanuel Macron, the European Union is indeed in trouble. And President Trump's idea of prioritizing American interests, putting America first, may also isolate this country from the rest of the world. During this absence, China is said to be ready to assume the leadership. Is China ready? We'll keep this discussion open. Until next time, goodbye.